

### More Information:

If you want to know more about keeping your child's teeth healthy, contact the:

Office of Oral Health  
Family Health Administration  
Maryland Department of Health  
and Mental Hygiene  
201 West Preston Street, 3rd Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
410-767-5300  
[www.fha.state.md.us/oralhealth](http://www.fha.state.md.us/oralhealth)  
e-mail: [oralhealth@dhmh.state.md.us](mailto:oralhealth@dhmh.state.md.us)

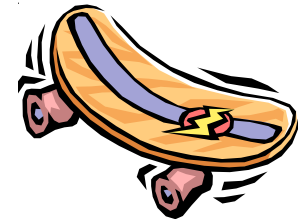


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## Mouth Guards: How to Protect Your Child's Teeth



Some tips for a healthy smile from your  
Maryland Department of Health  
and Mental Hygiene



Martin O'Malley, Governor  
Anthony G. Brown, Lieutenant Governor  
John M. Colmers, Secretary

## What is a Mouth Guard?

A mouth guard is a flexible piece of plastic that fits around the upper teeth.

A mouth guard should be worn when playing sports.

## Why Mouth Guards are Important

Dental injuries are the most common type of injuries to the face. Half of all these injuries can be prevented.

In the United States, 5 million teeth are knocked out each year - mainly front teeth.

The cost to repair a broken tooth is more expensive than a mouth guard.

60 percent of facial injuries occur during sports practice.

Activities that call for mouth protection include:

- Baseball
- Basketball
- Lacrosse
- Racquetball
- Soccer
- Field Hockey
- Gymnastics
- Football
- Water Polo
- Skateboarding
- Volleyball
- Roller Blading
- Bicycling
- Ice Hockey
- Squash
- Handball
- Martial Arts
- Boxing
- Wrestling

By wearing a mouth guard, your child will be able to keep their teeth safe and enjoy participating in sports.

## How to Choose a Mouth Guard

A mouth guard should:

- ✓ Be flexible
- ✓ Not tear
- ✓ Be comfortable
- ✓ Fit properly
- ✓ Be durable
- ✓ Be easy to clean
- ✓ Not get in the way of speaking or breathing
- ✓ Be odorless and tasteless



## Types of Mouth Guards

Stock Mouth Guards - These are sold in sporting goods stores in sizes small, medium and large. They are held in place by biting down.

Boil and Bite Mouth Guards - These are most commonly used. They are softened in boiling water and then formed to fit the mouth. These can be found in sporting goods stores and cost a little more than stock mouth guards.

Custom Made Mouth Guards - These are made by a dentist and are the most expensive type of mouth guard, but are the best at preventing injury.

